

REMARKS

Applicant wishes to thank Examiner Shapiro for the courteous interview granted Applicant's attorney.

During the interview, two new independent claims 22 and 29 were discussed. (Claim 29 was actually designated as claim 23 during the interview.) It was pointed out that the present invention involves a mail production apparatus, as well as a computer program for bringing the apparatus into a required operating condition. In particular, the invention seeks to enable inexperienced operators to make the necessary manual changes for bring a physical property of the apparatus into an operating condition. By "physical property" is meant, for example, such things as the type of documents that must be present in a feeder station, the presence of a particular type of station at a given position, the size of sheets to be printed, the position of a stop, and the kind of envelopes that must be present at a particular station. The claims define such physical properties as those that can be changed only by manual implementation by an operator, other than by electronic data entry. Each of independent claims 22 and 24 recites that there is determined a manual change still needed to be made to change at least one current physical property (e.g., a plurality of physical properties – claims 23, 25) into at least one required physical property, and causing an indication that such manual change still needs to be made to be represented in humanly perceptible form (e.g., visually on a display, or orally by a speech module). Accordingly, the operator is informed as to exactly what manual changes have to be made, thereby minimizing guesswork and errors, as well as ensuring a proper production rate.

The cited prior art does not disclose to provide such instructions for making manual changes of the non-electronic entry type. Anderson, Jr., et al. discloses in column 10, item no. 3, that if a "name" of a database is not specified, then the user must select one. However, it is not actually disclosed that the user is informed that such an entry has to be made. Also, even if such an indication were given, the property that is changed is not a physical property as defined in the claims because it merely involves electronic data entry.

Shimada et al. discloses, in connection with Fig. 52, a screen on which is printed "select sheet". However, it seems from the description beginning at column 44, line 57, and ending at column 45, line 8, that whatever "select sheet" means, it requires only the entry of electronic data (keystrokes) by the operator, whereupon the changes will be automatically made.

Note also that the expression "select sheet" implies that the operator must select the size or type of sheets needed to be present. In contrast, and as recited in dependent claims 26 and 33, the physical property that is indicated is the size of sheets. Thus, the operator is informed as to which sheet size to use and is relieved of the responsibility of selecting a size.

In other dependent claims, namely, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 32, 34, and 35, other physical properties are recited, which are precise, so as to relieve the operator of decision-making responsibility, e.g., the "type" of document (claims 24 and 31); the "type" of station (claims 25 and 32); the "position" of a stop (claims 26 and 34); and the "kind" of envelopes (claims 27 and 35). Attention is directed to the paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8 of the specification where these physical properties are enumerated.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 22 and 29 distinguish patentably over the applied prior art, along with all dependent claims.

It should be noted that in new independent claims 22 and 29, some of the expressions "at least" found in the original independent claims may have been omitted. That has been done merely for the purpose of clarity, not to restrict the claim scope. It is considered that the recitation of one item in a claim covers a plurality of such items.

In light of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact, by telephone, the applicant's undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed within the currently set shortened statutory period, applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such extension of time may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

In the event that any additional fees are due with this paper, please charge
our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

Respectfully submitted,

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